



# National Brownfields Assessment Pilot

## *Tacoma, WA*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

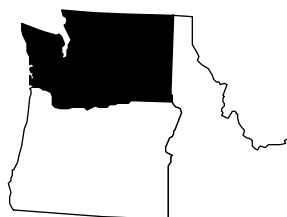
### BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of Tacoma for a Brownfields Pilot. Closing or relocating of industrial and maritime activities along Tacoma's downtown Thea Foss Waterway has contributed to unemployment and poverty in the area. Unemployment is more than 18%, and about 46% of the residents live below the poverty level. The industrial and maritime activities have left a legacy of contamination and liability that are inhibiting reuse and redevelopment along the waterway while suburban sprawl expands. The City is specifically concerned about the Waterway sites in the core of Tacoma's Enterprise Community where contamination could present an additional obstacle to economic revitalization.

### OBJECTIVES

The Pilot is working to encourage economic growth and redevelopment in the City's downtown core by addressing environmental contamination and liability issues head on. Redevelopment of the urban waterfront will promote productive land-use, reduce air and water pollution associated with urban sprawl, and expand job opportunities in locations accessible to low-income populations. To satisfy these objectives, Tacoma intends to conduct environmental site assessments, plan for

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Tacoma, Washington*

**Date of Award:**  
March 1996

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Site Profile:** The Pilot targets the 27-acre Thea Foss Waterway located in the core of Tacoma's Enterprise Community.

#### Contacts:

William Pugh  
Public Works Department  
Tacoma, Washington  
(206) 591-5525

Lori Cohen  
U.S. EPA Region 10  
(206) 553-6523  
cohen.lori@epamail.  
epa.gov

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site remediation, and identify incentives for redevelopment.

- Building on existing community involvement activities associated with the adjacent NPL site.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Pilot has:

- Established the Foss Waterway Development Authority as a separate legal entity to facilitate redevelopment of the Thea Foss Waterway while eliminating contamination, providing public access and preventing future blight. By Council resolutions, Tacoma authorized this entity with a seven member board comprised of leaders from the financial, real estate development and resource management industries; and
- Completed a draft of The Economic Analysis for Development of the Thea Foss Waterway. The report provides a look at the effects of public brownfields investments under different scenarios.

The Pilot is:

- Conducting an Economic and Market Analysis Study to determine the economic impacts of proposed developments as part of the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, determining the most appropriate mix of “doable” developments that will attract private investment;
- Conducting a Financing Strategy Plan to identify sources of public and private capital for feasible uses identified in the Economic Analysis and make recommendations on brownfields financing tools (e.g., a revolving loan fund to provide low interest, flexible term loans for priority projects); and
- Conducting a Public/Private Partnership Strategies Plan to prioritize projects which are essential and to analyze financing and community needs in order to develop an effective public/private collaboration and promote incentives.

## **LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES**

Experience with the Tacoma Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- Focusing brownfields efforts and resources on sites within the Empowerment Zone and adjacent NPL site.